

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 FRB-03
INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-06 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03
SP-02 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 AGRE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SS-15 /084 W
-----128160 220638Z /23

R 220547Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7968
INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY DACCA

C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 3051

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EINV, EIND, XO, CE

SUBJ: MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER J.R. JAYEWARDENE

1. I HAD FIRST INTERVIEW WITH PRIME MINISTER JAYEWARDENE
SATURDAY NOON, AUGUST 20. HE GREETED ME WARMLY, WHICH BELIED
HIS REPUTATION FOR COLD ALOOFNESS, "HOW NICE TO HAVE YOU
HERE AND THIS TIME AS AMBASSADOR. WE HAVE TIME FOR ONLY A
BRIEF CHAT NOW BUT SOON WE SHALL HAVE A LEISURELY VISIT AT
MY HOME."

2. I EXPRESSED SALLY'S AND MY PLEASURE AT BEING BACK, CON-
FIRMED MY INTENTION OF BEING AVAILABLE WHENEVER HE WISHED,
BUT THAT I WOULD USE HIS FOREIGN MINISTER AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE.

3. AFTER PERSONAL CHIT CHAT, I SAID I THOUGHT IT IMPORTANT
FOR THE DELEGATION THAT GOES TO BANK/FUND MEETINGS TO BE WELL
PREPARED TO SHOW HOW NEW GOVERNMENT PLANNED TO TACKLE PRO-
DUCTIVITY
IN AGRICULTURE, ESTATES AND INDUSTRY, SINCE HIS FOOD
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PACKAGE OF LAST WEEK WOULD LOOK TO THE OLD HANDS IN WASHINGTON
AND NEW YORK VERY MUCH LIKE ALL PREVIOUS GOVERNMENTS.

4. HE SKETCHED HIS VISION OF AN INDUSTRIAL FREE ZONE CALLED
GREATER COLOMBO NOW BEING PLANNED FOR NORTH OF COLOMBO, WHERE
FOREIGN INVESTMENT BY ALL COMERS WILL BE WELCOMED, DRAWING
ANALOGY WITH SINGAPORE. HE CLEARLY HOPES FOR SOME FOREIGN

ASSISTANCE TO GET THAT GOING. HE ALSO PLANS TO CHANGE LEGISLATION TO ENCOURAGE DIRECT PRIVATE INVESTMENT THROUGHOUT THE ISLAND. BUT SPECIFICS OF BOTH IDEAS NOT YET DISCUSSED. HE RESPONDED WITH ENTHUSIASM TO MY ILLUSTRATIVE MENTION OF SEARS ROEBUCK ARRANGEMENT WITH A LOCAL FIRM FOR CLOTHING ASSEMBLY HERE AS AN EXAMPLE OF LOW-CAPITAL JOBS CREATED BY FOREIGN FIRMS WHICH MIGHT EXPAND IF PROPERLY ENCOURAGED AND LOW LABOR COSTS AND RELIABILITY ASSURED.

5. IN A BRIEF GENERAL DISCUSSION OF THE INDIAN OCEAN, HE WAS REASSURED THAT THE SUPERPOWERS WERE DISCUSSING MUTUAL NAVAL SELF-RESTRAINT, BUT ALSO THAT THERE WAS NO EVIDENCE EITHER WERE READY TO ABANDON THE INDIAN OCEAN TO THE OTHER OR TO CEYLON'S LARGER NEIGHBORS.

6. ON THE PROBLEM OF STAFFING TOP POSITIONS HERE, HE SHOWED INTEREST IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT SPECIAL PRESIDENTIAL COMMITTEE TO REVIEW AMBASSADORIAL APPOINTMENTS SINCE THEY ARE CONSIDERING A SELECT COMMITTEE TO REVIEW SENIOR APPOINTMENTS, IN PART TO INSULATE MINISTERS FROM FAMILY AND POLITICAL PRESSURES WHICH SO MARKED PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT AND WHICH, HE INDICATED, ARE ALREADY BEING EXERTED ON HIS MINISTERS FOR TOP JOBS.

7. ACTION REQUESTED: PLEASE AIRPOUCH URGENTLY MATERIAL ON CARTER TRANSITION PROCESS AND AMBASSADORIAL REVIEW COMMITTEE COMPOSITION AND PROCESS. THIS NEEDS TO BE HERE IN TWO TO TWO
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AND A HALF WEEKS FOR MAXIMUM UTILITY.

8. IN A BRIEF DISCUSSION OF THE DOMESTIC DIFFICULTIES, HE BELIEVED A SHOW OF FIRMNESS BY THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CALM THINGS DOWN AND EXPECTED BY MONDAY ALL WOULD BE BACK TO NORMAL.

9. COMMENT: I WAS GENERALLY PLEASED WITH THIS BEGINNING CONVERSATION. HE WAS CALM UNDER PRESENT PRESSURES, WELL-INFORMED, AND THOUGH AWARE OF DIFFICULT ECONOMIC LEGACY OF PREVIOUS REGIMES, QUIETLY CONFIDENT OF HIS REGIME'S CAPACITY TO SET THINGS GOING. OBVIOUSLY HIS PLATE IS PRETTY FULL AT LEAST FOR NOW.
WRIGGINS

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